

Dunscornb House  
Memphis, Tennessee.

Shelby Co

HABS NO. 19-1

HABS  
TENN  
79-MEMPH,

1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
DISTRICT NO. 19

Historic American Buildings Survey  
J. Frazer Smith, District Officer  
36 So. Evergreen, Memphis, Tenn.

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of 1

DUNSCOMB RESIDENCE  
or  
LITTLE GREEK HOUSE

584 South Front Street  
Memphis, Shelby County  
Tennessee

Owner: J.S. Dunscomb.

Date of Erection: Between 1844 and 1850 (see following page); about  
1846 (see drawings).

Architect: No record.

Builder: Wardlow Howard (see drawings).

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: One, and basement.

Materials of Construction: Brick. Stuccoed on front.

Other Existing Records: See text.

Additional Data: See following pages.

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HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL NOTES:

This little Greek Revival building is an old Frazier home, built in the early eighteen-forties from the plans of an unknown French architect. In the eighteen-fifties the house was owned by Col. Hugh Rice Austin, who had two attractive daughters.<sup>1</sup> Austin was a large plantation owner of Mississippi. An old line Whig, he spent considerable time in Washington prior to the War of Rebellion in an effort to prevent the clash.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Virginia Frazer Boyle, poet laureate of the Confederacy, and grand-daughter of Colonel Austin, is living at present at #653 South McLean Street in Memphis. Attorney Thomas R. Boyle, her husband, believes the house was built by Wardlow Howard. It is at present owned by J.S.Dunscomb and occupied by tenants.<sup>2</sup>

In 1933 the Board of Architects selected this house as one of the six best examples of early Memphis architecture.<sup>1</sup>

The main façade has a four columned Ionic porch and coupled pilasters separated by niches at the corners of the building. The niches formerly contained draped marble figures of household gods, a fact revealing the Greek mania of this period. The classical entablature is heavy; otherwise the design is excellent.

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<sup>1</sup>History of the Homes and Gardens of Tennessee, compiled by the Gargen Study Club of Nashville, pp. 313, 314.

<sup>2</sup>Given by Marshall Smith, approved by J. Frazer Smith. Original paper in field notebook.

by *Henry Chaudler Forman*  
May, 1936